Poor Gamer's Almanac

Vol. II - Issue 2
January 2005

In this Issue:

The C'ahem Library

Encounters of the Malsara: Part II

Unorthodox Rogues Preview

3D Model, Maps and More!

d20 system

AEA Publishing Group

Requires the use of a Roleplaying Game Core Book published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Veterinarian Medical Facility

Case File

The Whisper of Horses

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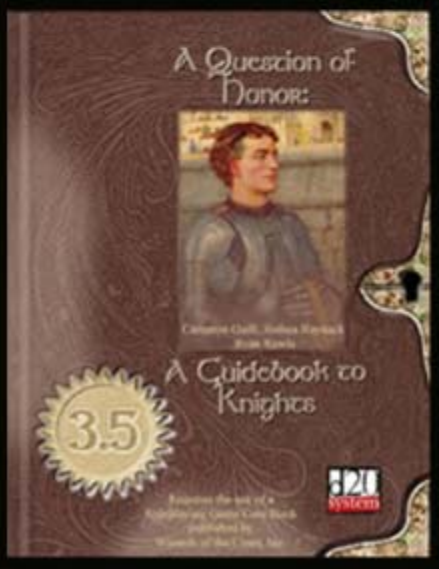

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Issue 2 - January 2005

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CONTENTS

1 COVER ART BY JEAN GEROME
5 THOUGHTS FROM THE PUBLISHER
5 LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER
6 UPCOMING RELEASES
6 Honor and Corruption
6 Game Supplement Preview: The Saintly Thief
8 BOOKS FOR THE GAMER
9 THE HILL LANDS GAZEETER: THE C'AHEM LIBRARY
12 THE TURCOMAN
15 ENCOUNTERS OF THE MALSARA
18 3D MODELS: CITY DWELLING

This month's cover art is done by Jean Gerome. If you want to display your artwork as a cover or for future "Art Gallery" articles, please write to Joshua Raynack at jraynack@aleapublishing.com

We also like to thank The Le Games, RPGAttitude.com, GamingReport.com, and RPGNow.com, for their contributions for this month's issue of *Poor Gamer's Almanac.*

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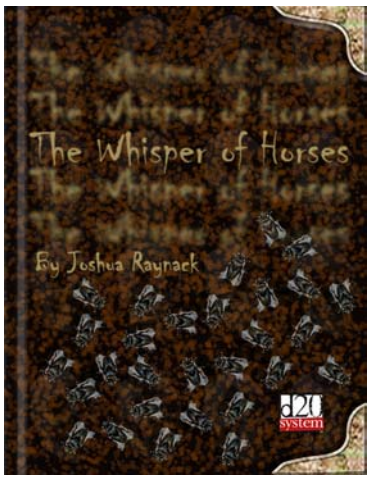

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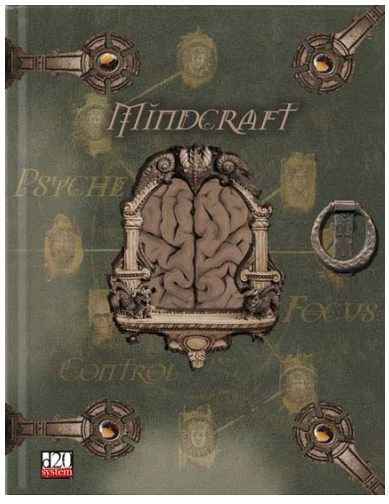

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Poor Gamer's Almanac

THOUGHTS FROM THE PUBLISHER

Well, welcome once again to another issue of the *Poor Gamer's Almanac*. I am pleased to announce that the first issue was a great success and we have many other publishers to thank for their contribution as well as to all those that downloaded the previous issue. Our numbers show that nearly twenty-five percent of those people who viewed the site actually downloaded it. So continue telling your friends and ask them to download it as well. Heck, its free.

There are a few changes at Alea Publishing Group that are being announced here. First and foremost, Alea Publishing Group will be discontinuing a few of its product lines to focus more on the image we have tried to build upon: products that present a realistic, historical feel to the game table. The product lines that we discontinue will be focused within the pages of this magazine. The following product lines are being discontinued: The Studio Companion Series and the Paper Tiles series. You may still purchase the already existing products, but we will only publish additions to the series in the *Poor Gamer's Almanac*.

Second, beginning with all future back issues of the *Poor Gamer's Almanac,* we will begin charging a fee between one to two dollars. This fee will cover the costs of putting current issues into the Free Section of certain online distributors and hopefully build up enough loose change to pay for contributing writers.

Which leads to our third item to discuss: submissions. As you will see below, this is one of the most asked about subjects in the e-mails we have received since the launch of the first issue. So, without further adieu, let us begin with . . .

LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER

We like to thank all those that sent us letters since last issue. We would like this forum to grow, so should you have questions about the *Poor Gamer's Almanac*, the products featured in this magazine, or any Alea Publishing Group product, just let us know.

Help Us Fill This Section

This means you! Let this page grow as a Letters to the Publisher section. Do you like what you see? Do you hate what you see? What would you like to grace these pages?

So write our Editor and Public Relations guy Cameron Guill at:

cguill@aleapublishing.com

Enjoyed your Poor Gamers Almanac immensely. Do you accept submissions?

We would love to have submissions to the magazine. We have recently posted submission guidelines at our web site, however you can download them HERE.

Are you only interested in d20 articles for the magazine?

Though most of the articles our staff will produce will be d20 related and to that of our products, we would like to see other game systems show up between these pages. However, the difficulty is the ability to get permission to use copyrighted game mechanics. If you send us an article that has copyrighted game mechanics in it, we will seek permission from the particular publisher to use it in this magazine.

We would like to appeal to all poor gamers and not just those that play d20. As a Game Master, there are a lot of other good, solid systems out there besides that of the d20 system.

In *A Question of Loyalty: A Guidebook to Military Orders*, you failed to fully explain the level adjustment for the class templates. It is easy enough to understand when starting at 1st level, but what if I want to apply a class template later on?

When you apply a class template, simply add the level adjustment to your character. If you are not first level, you must play "catch up" with your experience point total before you advance another level. For example, a 13th level character wants to add a class template. They are considered to be a 14th level character. The character must now earn enough experience points to reach 15th level in order to advance.

UPCOMING RELEASES

Last issue we brought artwork in the upcoming product *Honor and Corruption* by Alea Publishing Group. This month Alea has allowed us a sneak peak at some of the honor rewards that characters can acquire that will help them during a game session. These are just a few of the many honor rewards a character can receive.

Corrupt Vision
Those that are corrupt find it difficult to evade your stare.
Prerequisite: Honor score 75.
Duration: An entire game session.
Benefit: You may cast *detect corruption* at will.

Family Honor
Your family continues to exude honor throughout generations.
Prerequisite: You must have earned honor by means of an honorable death.
Duration: Permanent.
Benefit: You gain a +1 to one of your ability scores for your next character from the same family or clan of the deceased character for every 30 points of honor that you possessed. This honor reward activates at the time of your death once selected.
Special: If you select this honor reward, your character may not return to life by any means.

Luck Favors the Honored
Your good karma is reflected by lucky circumstances.
Duration: Instantaneous.
Benefit: As an immediate action, you may spend this reward to re-roll one saving throw before results are determined.

Unfailing Courage
You find it easy to hold yourself against the most fearful of creatures.
Prerequisite: Wis 14.
Duration: Instantaneous.
Benefit: Activate this reward to reduce the effects of Fear by one step.

GAME SUPPLEMENT PREVIEW

The following preview this month is the Saintly Thief prestige class from *Unorthodox Rogues* brought to you by The Le Games.

The Saintly Thief

The Saintly Thief has, for reasons of conscience, decided to rob only criminals and others who benefit from illgotten gains. Except for pocketing a 10 percent "finders fee," the Saintly Thief then donates the remainder of her plunder to a good cause.

Because stealing from criminals has its own unique risks, most notably lethal retribution, the Saintly Thief has become adept at disguise and adopting other identities. The Saintly Thief never embarks on a job using her real name. Even if she works with the same group of characters from time to time, they may not realize she is the same person

Table J-1: The Saintly Thief

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Nom de guerre
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Alter ego
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Sneak attack +1d6, quickly-quickly
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Materials at hand
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sneak attack +2d6, gravy in your hair
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Mimicking the mark, crossing over
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Sneak attack +3d6, race is no obstacle

because of her skill at slipping into another identity.

A Saintly Thief who routinely makes donations to a good-aligned church can expect to receive help in the form of healing, information and sanctuary.

Hit Die: d4.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a saintly thief, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Chaotic Good.

Skills: Disable Device 6 ranks, Open Lock 6 ranks, Disguise 4 ranks, Gather Information 4 ranks.

Special: Sneak attack +1d6.

CLASS SKILLS

The saintly thief's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (Religion), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 12 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the saintly thief prestige class.

Nom de Guerre: Beginning at 1st level, the saintly thief adopts a naming convention for her false identities. Usually this means using the same initials for each identity or coming up with variations on the name of her patron church's deity. The false identities should have a touch of whimsy. A conceit of the prestige class is that the more whimsical the name, such as Shelly Timwiddle or Sharaka Tom, the more effective it is. As long as the saintly thief sticks to the naming convention, her foes will never put the two together because they have the same format. In fact, a saintly thief operating under a Nom de Guerre is worth a +2 bonus to any Disguise or Bluff check.

Alter Ego: At 2nd level, the saintly thief establishes a Nom de Guerre that is essentially a second identity that donning the disguise becomes second nature. Even without the benefit of donning a disguise, the saintly thief can assume the alter ego with a circumstantial +4 Disguise bonus and +2 Bluff and +2 Gather information bonus.

Sneak Attack: At 3rd level, the saintly thief's *sneak attack* deals an additional 1d6 of damage. This stacks with *sneak attack* bonuses gained from other sources. This damage increases by 1d6 at 5th level and 7th level.

Quickly-quickly: At 3rd level, the saintly thief can make a disguise change more quickly than is normal (1d3x5 minutes).

Materials At Hand: At 4th level, the saintly thief does not need a disguise kit to be effective. The saintly thief is expert at using any materials to effectively put together a disguise kit, earning a +2 circumstance bonus to disguise.

Gray in Your Hair: At 5th level, a difference in age is no longer an obstacle to making an effective

disguise, so long as the desired age is one step older or younger than the saintly thief. The –2 penalty for disguise of a different age no longer applies.

Mimicking the mark: At 6th level, the saintly thief can, once per operation, attempt to disguise as a specific individual (usually the leader) that is the target of his operation. This can only be attempted after at least one observation of the person being impersonated. This ability is used to infiltrate a headquarters or to issue confusing or conflicting orders. This adjusts the familiarity bonus to those who know the target as follows:

- Recognizes on sight: -2
- Friends or associates: none
- Close friends: +2
- Intimidate: +4

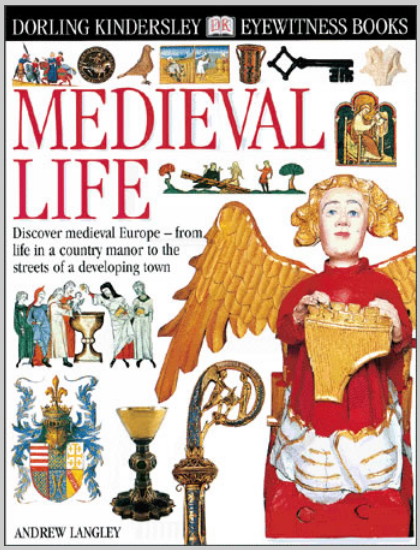
This can only be attempted once per operation. It cannot be attempted again because the opposition is on guard against the saintly thief's disguises.

Crossing Over: At 6th level, gender is no longer an obstacle to making an effective disguise. The -2 penalty for disguise of a different gender no longer applies.

Race is no obstacle: At 7th level, race is no longer an obstacle to making an effective disguise, so long as the size of the race being imitated is the same as the saintly thief. The -2 penalty for disguise of a different race no longer applies.

Books For the Gamer

By Joshua Raynack


DORLING KINDERSLEY
EYEWITNESS BOOKS
MEDIEVAL LIFE
Discover medieval Europe – from life in a country manor to the streets of a developing town
ANDREW LANGLEY

At first glance, this might seem like a children's book (as a matter of fact that is where we found this gem; in the children's section), but don't let that fool you. *Medieval Life* offers many great ideas for the game table as well as a super visual guide.

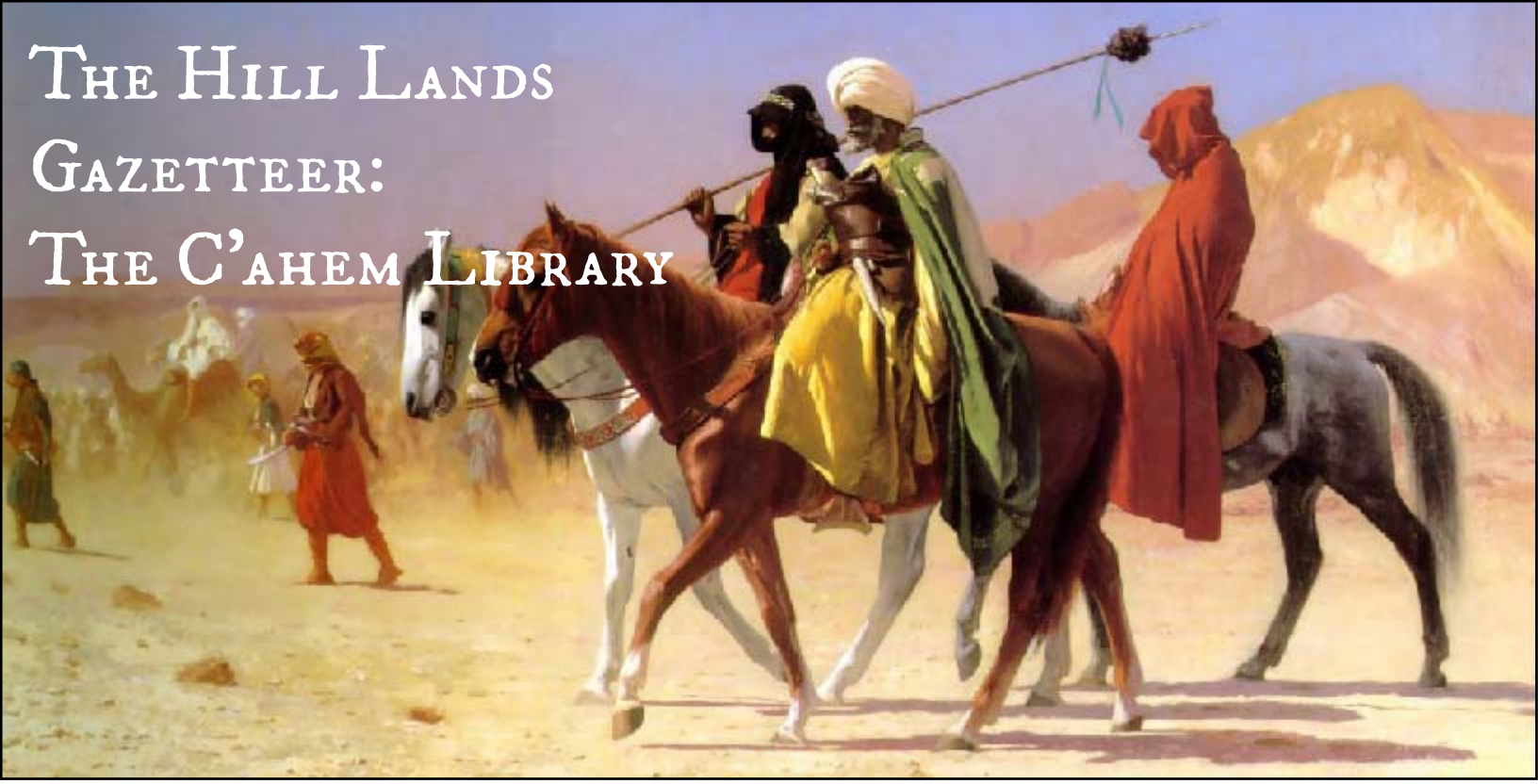
Some of the things you will find within are: what medieval banquets were like, life in the monastery, the clothes of different social classes, fair food, and much more.

After Reading this book, you will want to incorporate a lot of the things displayed into your game: a tumbrel coin balance, a wooden calculator, money boxes, fair chews, medieval toothpaste, plague pits, and much more. Also, don't worry should you have a gaming group consisting only of number crunchers for the book contains what life was like for the typical mercenary or soldier.

The cost: $15.99 US—considering the great visual aids you can use during the game and it being a hardback book, makes it a worthwhile purchase.

Do you have a book that will help a fellow gamer? Well, tell us about it. Write a brief article about a book and send it to us at either cguill@aleapublishing.com or jraynack@aleapublishing.com.

The Hill Lands Gazetteer: The C'ahem Library



C'ahem Librarian

Along the edge of the Malsara Desert; besmirched by the ever present sandgrass; facing deadly windswept moments of stinging dust and sand; the beleaguered C'ahem library travels on the backs of camels, horses, and nomadic Turcoman librarians. It meanders listlessly across the shifting plains stopping occasionally at an oasis or newly discovered watering hole left by the once great Eygus Empire.

The librarians, burnt-faced Turcoman, carry mounds of papers, papyrus, scraped vellum, rare tomes (complete, incomplete, and partially destroyed texts of ancient authors who have slipped into the sands of time), and odd sand encrusted devices. These endeared treasures, along with the hardships of the Turcoman, are the very blood that pushes their weathered feet along the edge of the lifeless desert.

Their great endurance and physical hardship is equally on par with their great, cunning intellect and agile swordsmanship. C'ahem librarians are trained extensively in the blade, the pen, and the written word. The latter two forms of study are obvious and necessary in recognizing the importance of ancient script; whether written on animal skins, gems, or bones. The former, the dutiful art of swordplay, is more for the protection of the material they carry rather than their lives. When encamped, young C'ahem librarians train on average two hours a day while older scholars translate text to the ornate Turcoman script or greet travelers.

Most of the library's collection comes from hidden windswept ruins (more than likely dating from the Eygus or Romus Empires) of the unforgiving Malsara Desert. Youths of various Turcoman tribes brave the desert and battle the unliving to earn manhood. While most young Turcoman track orc prisoners or other criminals during the Dead Sun Hunt, those who wish to serve as C'ahem librarians scour horrid haunts for the written word. This is usually the most dangerous venture for those undead, in whose tombs the texts lie, usually treasure the arcane words as well.

Other ancient works are collected by C'ahem librarians that travel the known, or sometimes unknown, world of Terra. They barter, buy, search the old cities, steal, or kill, to obtain new acquisitions. However, the latter is rare and usually pertains to great Turcoman works. Furthermore, this occurrence happens after the previous methods were unsuccessful.

Hit Die: d8

> This is the first appearance of the Hill Lands Gazetteer. It is designed to fill out the Hill Lands region that first appeared in *A Question of Honor: A Guidebook to Knights*. This month, since we are featuring encounters in the Malsara Desert, we thought we ought to show you a glimpse of the Turcoman culture that inhabits the outer edges of the desert.

Requirements

To qualify to become a C'ahem Librarian, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (any two) 10 ranks in each.

Feats: Endurance.

Special: Must add one book to the library that is worth at least 1,000 gp.

Table J-2: The C'ahem Librarian

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Secret, terrain mastery (desert)
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Combat style (two-weapon fighting), defensive stance 1/day
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Ability boost (+2 Int), secret
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Defensive stance 2/day
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Improved terrain mastery (desert), secret
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Ability boost (+2 Int), defensive stance 3/day
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	Improved combat style (two-weapon fighting), secret
8th	+6	+6	+6	+2	Defensive stance 4/day
9th	+6	+6	+6	+3	Ability boost (+2 Int), mobile defense, secret
10th	+7	+7	+7	+4	Defensive stance 5/day

Class Skills

The C'ahem librarian's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (all skill taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Speak language, Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the C'ahem librarian prestige class.

Secret: At 1st level and every two levels higher than 1st (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th), the loremaster chooses one secret from the table below. His level plus Intelligence modifier determines which of the secrets he can choose. He can't choose the same secret twice.

Terrain Mastery: Terrain mastery gives a C'ahem librarian a bonus on checks involving a skill useful in that terrain, or some other appropriate benefit. A C'ahem librarian also knows how to fight dangerous creatures typically found in that terrain, gaining a +1 insight bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls against creatures with that terrain mentioned in the Environment entry of their descriptions. The C'ahem librarian only gains the bonus if the creature description specifically lists the terrain type.

Table J-3: C'ahem Librarian Secrets

Level + Int Modifier	Secret	Effect
1st	Instant mastery	4 ranks of a skill in which the character has no ranks
2nd	Secret health	+3 hit points
3rd	Secrets of inner strength	+2 bonus on Will saves
4th	The lore of true stamina	+2 bonus on Fortitude saves
5th	Secret knowledge of avoidance	+2 bonus on Reflex saves
6th	Weapon trick	+1 bonus on attack rolls
7th	Dodge trick	+1 dodge bonus to AC
8th	Applicable knowledge	Any one feat
9th	Newfound arcana	1 bonus 1st-level spell*
10th	More newfound arcana	1 bonus 2nd-level spell*

* As if gained through having a high ability score. Should the character have no spell casting ability, then ignore this effect.

C'ahem librarians take their terrain mastery with them wherever they go. They retain their terrain mastery bonuses on skill checks, attack rolls, and damage rolls whether they're actually in the relevant terrain or not.

Desert: You resist effects that tire you. You are immune to fatigue, and anything that would cause you to become exhausted makes you fatigued instead. You gain a +1 insight bonus on attack and damage rolls against desert creatures.

Combat Style (Ex): At 2nd level, a C'ahem librarian gains the two-weapon combat style. When he gain this ability, he is treated as having the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, even if he does not have the normal prerequisites for that feat.

The benefits of this style apply only when he wears light or no armor. He loses all benefits of his combat style when wearing medium or heavy armor.

Defensive Stance: When he adopts a defensive stance, a C'ahem librarian gains phenomenal strength and durability, but he cannot move from the spot he is defending. He gains +2 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, a +2 resistance bonus on all saves, and a +4 dodge bonus to AC. The increase in Constitution increases the C'ahem librarian's hit points by 2 points per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the defensive stance when the Constitution score drops back 4 points. These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are. While in a defensive stance, a C'ahem librarian cannot use skills or abilities that would require him to shift his position. A defensive stance lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the character's (newly improved) Constitution modifier. A C'ahem librarian may end his defensive stance voluntarily prior to this limit. At the end of the defensive stance, the C'ahem librarian is winded and takes a –2 penalty to Strength for the duration of that encounter. A C'ahem librarian can only use his defensive stance a certain number of times per day as determined by his level (see Table J-2: The C'ahem Librarian). Using the defensive stance takes no time itself, but a C'ahem librarian can only do so during his action.

Ability Boost (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, a C'ahem librarian's Intelligence score increases by 2 points. This happens again at 6th level and once more at 9th level for a total increase of +6.

Improved Terrain Mastery: At 5th level, the C'ahem librarian gains an additional +1 insight bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls against creatures from the desert region.

Improved Combat Style (Ex): At 7th level, a C'ahem librarian's aptitude in his combat style (two-weapon combat) improves. The librarian is treated as having the Improved Two-Weapon Fighting feat, even if he does not have the normal prerequisites for that feat.

As before, the benefits of this style apply only when he wears light or no armor. He loses all benefits of his combat style when wearing medium or heavy armor.

Mobile Defense (Ex): At 9th level, a C'ahem librarian can adjust his position while maintaining a defensive stance. While in a defensive stance, he can take one 5-foot step each round without losing the benefit of the stance.

TURCOMAN

The dust storm swept the edges of the Malsara Desert. Ih'eman watched closely from a protected hilltop as the orcs and human knights battled for supremacy within the stinging sand. Every now and then a flag or pennant would emerge only to fall again, perhaps trampled by horses or frothing orc warriors.

"Well," a noble knight spoke perched high above his horse, "The battle seems to be at a standstill. Can you see anything, Ih'eman?"

"Not much." The Turcoman was not nearly adapt in speaking the foreigner's strange and brutal tongue.

"Do you think you can help us turn this tide? We know that this particular orc tribe has been hampering your people's peace for some time. A strong alliance between our two peoples will be beneficial."

Ih'eman waited patiently for his son to interpret the confident knight's plea. The fierce Turcoman warrior was pleased at his son's skill. He was right to send his son to Argos to learn the foreign tongue.

After listening, Ih'eman responded: "How can you fight your enemy when you do not understand your mistress. The Hill Lands, like a beguiling woman, swallows all. I nor my people will fight today." He turned his horse away from the scene below as dust clouds spoke of blood and uncertainty.

"Well, what did your father say?"

"He said to control your whore, Lord Behan." With that said, the young man followed his father. The tribe disappeared from wherever they came.

Turcoman tribesman inhabit nearly all of the Hill Lands region especially along the edge of the Malsara Desert. They are native to these lands and have a nomadic, horseman culture dating back several thousand years. They are a mysterious enigma to the foreign crusaders that, as of recent, claim the lands off the coast of the Aquan Ocean (or Ocean of Dreams). The presence of these intruders bring many interpretations from the various tribal councils.

Adventurers: Turcoman adventure to improve their own sense of self worth and to preserve their cultural beliefs. These tasks might include battling the many orc tribes contesting their tribal lands or protecting ancient ancestral tombs before Knight Hospitallers or Calderian mercenaries plunder the valuable treasures of the dead. Many tribesmen serve as guides, scouts, or belong to the Knight Templar military order serving as turcopoles (see *A Question of Loyalty: A Guidebook to Military Orders* for more details).

Characteristics: Turcoman are cautious of traditions, faith, and the harsh natural world of the Hill Lands. They have a truly deep respect for nature and the animal kingdom. Turcoman youths are taught at an early age to either respect the forces of nature or be consumed by them. For them, there is no in-between.

Alignment: Most Turcoman maintain the recognition of natural laws, however their outlook follows the ever-changing landscape therefore are more chaotic in mindset. Because of this outlook, there are many tribes with many different attitudes.

Religion: Turcoman do not differ in their religious beliefs and practices, like most human cultures. All tribes tend to favor gods and goddesses of strength, nature, and retribution. In addition, since they maintain close ties to the Malsara Desert, some tribes have accustomed themselves to worship the old gods of the pharonic pantheon.

Background: Being from a Turcoman tribe, a

Table: The Turcoman

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Track, Wild empathy (Horses)	+1 level of ranger
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Trained steed	+1 level of ranger
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Skilled horseman	+1 level of ranger

character should have a strong sense of self, a distrust for overt magic and a greater fear for the subtle arcane arts. There is a great pride and a constant awareness that death can come at any moment. With this notion, many Turcoman do not let petty squabbles interfere in long-lasting friendships. The reality, however, is if you cannot adapt, you will die. In recent times a delicate balance has been disputed among tribal leaders between change and tradition.

Races: Unlike most paragon classes, all Turcoman are humans and thus only humans may advance in this class.

Other Classes: There are two specific classes to consider in advancing when multiclassing with the Turcoman paragon class: the ranger and barbarian. The ranger class is superbly augmented with the spells per day ability a Turcoman receives. Although it does not actually grant spells, it will get a jump on accessing those spells should they advance as a ranger. The Turcoman's distrust for arcane magic is synonymous with the barbarian character class. A few levels of this class will diversify any barbarian character.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Turcoman paragons have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Dexterity is important to Turcomen because it helps them avoid blows as they tend to wear light armor. In addition, many of their skills work off of this ability. A good Wisdom score will also help them acquire and cast spells should characters advance as a ranger later on.

Alignment: Any.

Race: Human.

Hit Die: d8.

CLASS SKILLS

The Turcoman paragon class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis) Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spot (Int), Survival (Wis), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at lst Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each additional level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the Turcoman.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Turcoman are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light armor, and shields (except tower shields). They are also proficient in the following exotic weapons: whip, bolas, and net.

Spells per Day: Beginning at 1st level, a Turcoman paragon gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in ranger. The paragon does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. This essentially means that the character adds the level of Turcoman paragon to his level in ranger, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly. If the Turcoman paragon has no levels in ranger, this class feature has no effect.

Track: A Turcoman gains Track as a bonus feat.

Wild Empathy (Horses Only) (Ex): A Turcoman can improve the attitude of any type of horse. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of a person. The Turcoman rolls 1d20 and adds his Turcoman level and his Charisma bonus to determine the wild empathy check result. A typical domesticated horse has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild horses are usually unfriendly.

To use wild empathy, the Turcoman and the horse must be able to study each other, which means that they must be within 30 feet of one another under normal visibility conditions. Generally, influencing a horse in this way takes 1 minute, but, as with influencing people, it might take more or less time.

The Turcoman can also use this ability to influence a horse with a template that changes its type to

magical beast and has an Intelligence score of 1 or 2, but he takes a –4 penalty on the check.

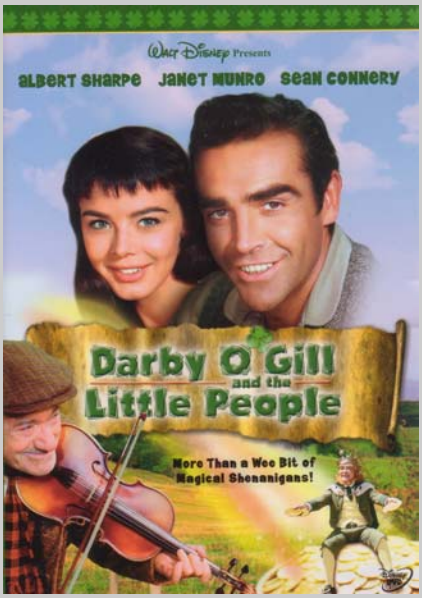
Turcoman levels stack with ranger levels when using the ranger ability of the same name when improving the attitude of a horse.

Trained Steed (Ex): At 2nd level, a Turcoman can summon his horses. He must be within visual or audible range for them, but requires only a whisper or a nod. The horses run toward him at full speed, and halt right beside him so he can mount them easily.

Skilled Horseman (Ex): At 3rd level, the Turcoman becomes so skilled with handling his horses, his steeds respond to his commands as if trained. The Turcoman's horses learns a new bonus trick starting at 3rd level, learning one additional trick for every 5 levels attained thereafter regardless of class (see the *Player's Handbook* for details on tricks and the Handle Animal skill).

Movies For the Gamer

By Joshua Raynack


Walt Disney Presents
ALBERT SHARPE JANET MUNRO SEAN CONNERY
Darby O'Gill and the Little People
More Than a Wee Bit of Magical Shenanigans!

Before *Harry Potter* and Peter Jackson's interpretation of *The Lord of the Rings*, there were Sean Connery and Darby O'Gill. In the 1959 Walt Disney classic, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, the movie takes its viewers into the world of leprechauns as Darby must match wits against King Brian to get the pot o' gold and help fight off the banshee. The shrewd little trickster, five thousand years old, has a few things up his sleeve to make sure that the gold stays were it should: in his coffers.

Darby O'Gill contains magic, treasure, storytelling, and quick wit as Darby O'Gill and King Brian battle over egos and gold. Soon everyone around the table will be singing the *Wishing Song*. And you will see a young Sean Connery wooing the ladies, getting in barroom brawls, and . . . . singing?

The DVD also offers two great behind-the-scenes documentaries: How *I Captured The King of The Leprechauns* and *Little People, Big Effects*. The latter shows in great detail how they made the convincing special effects. Many of which were used by Peter Jackson when making *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

So go to your local movie place and rent *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. You will have a great time watching it with the gang or family.

Do you have a movie that for a fellow gamer? Well, tell us about it. Write a brief article about a book and send it to us at either cguill@aleapublishing.com or jraynack@aleapublishing.com.

Encounters of the Malsara: Part II

Once again, we bring you an encounter of the Malsara Desert, the harsh region east of the Hill Lands featured in *A Question of Honor: A Guidebook to Knights*. However, the encounter can take place in any desert region.

Last month we brought you *Claymen*. In the following scenario, *The Hags of Wentworth*, players gain witness to the creatures that explore the Malsara from time to time and exploit the constant battles that happen between crusaders and orcs.

As with last month's article, this encounter is designed to surprise, challenge, and entertain players as each one is memorable.

STARTING POINT

You, as Game Master, need the core rules books, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. or the SRD found at RPGNow.com. Furthermore, knowledge of the Hill Lands area featured in *A Question of Honor: A Guidebook to Knights* is useful. Although this adventure uses the 3.5 format of the d20 game system, it may be easily converted into the 3.0 format.

This encounter can fit into any existing campaign without difficulty. Feel free to add to or adjust the material within to fit your needs.

First, read through each encounter so that you are familiar with them. This will help you run the encounter smoothly.

Secondly, print out the product, or just run it from your computer.

Material italicized contains information that can be read or paraphrased to your players while all other information is only meant for you.

HAGS OF WENTWORTH (EL 12)

This encounter exploits the powerful abilities of the harpies while giving the players "out of game" knowledge of what might be their next encounter. This also builds upon a background for their opponents, a more realistic view of the world they venture within, and builds upon the fear of the unknown.

ENCOUNTER SYNOPSIS

The PCs are hampered in their travels by a small coven of harpies. The harpies will continue to hamper the group until they are killed, driven off, or the characters have nothing left to possess.

ENCOUNTER BACKGROUND

This band of harpies is led by a skilled archer that has adopted the human name of Sheila. She in turn has collected two others under her influence calling them Amandis and Elizabeth.

She convinced them through brute power to leave the marshes and the ruins of Wentworth, that lie northeast of the Malsara, into the lifeless desert. Sheila has learned through torturing lost orcs and "swamprats" that a war may be brewing west of the Malsara. The extra shipment and supply lines to support soldiers on the move may prove worthy of food and sport.

GETTING STARTED

Read or paraphrase the following:

Sheila perched upon a statue of some important man of old, licking the condensation gathering upon her strong nabbuk wood bow. Two others watched with a parched tongue and a gleam of envy shot from their eyes. They had both conversed in the night to possibly slit Sheila's throat and have the bow for themselves, however they fell into argument as to which one should carry the bow since neither trusted the other.

Sheila smiled wryly in pleasure at the others' discomfort until one of the hags spoke: "Sheila, why again must we endure this heat. My skin cracks and my belly aches for flesh and my mouth; my mouth is so parched."

"Yes, mine too. Mine too," the other pleaded.

"War is brewing in the west. Merchants and supply trains will follow to support the foolish men. Orcs and Turcamen will drive some of those that lag behind into the desert. That is when we shall take what they carry and leave them to burn in the sand.

"Should we leave them all. What of food?"

"We won't leave them all. We shall fill our bellies and carry enough dried meat to sustain us back to Wentworth."

The other two hags leapt in glee as they paraded about with thoughts of skinning live human flesh.

This montage is meant to put players on edge and give a background and reason for the encounter. This is important in that it further creates an atmosphere of the region, embroiled in war and the vultures that lie in wait to reap the benefits.

Light: This encounter takes place at night. Should

the PCs light a campfire to keep them warm through the chilly desert night, then those about the camp have a 40 ft. vision around the campfire.

Listen: Listen check (DC d20+30). A successful listen check will begin to hear the faint but steady tune of the following:

Cometh my child, so tender and plump,
innocent eyes, and a soft baby's rump.
Mother is near and will cradle you dear,
as you suckle upon mother's breast.
As you sleep, nearer mother creeps,
to filet your young flesh for mother to eat,
for mothers always knows best.

Encounter Distance: The encounter distance begins at 300 ft. as one of the harpies begins to sing. Needless to say, whether or not they initially hear the song, it grows loud enough so that those on watch must make a Will save (DC 16) to walk captivated toward the two harpies. Those that are sleeping must also make a Will save (DC 16), however they are not captivated but instead have a nightmarish sleep that causes them to be fatigued the following day (-2 to Strength and Dexterity). Should those on watch successfully make their save, the harpies will move closer within the sight of their darkvision and the other harpy will begin to sing.

Combat Tactics: Should the two harpies, Amandis and Elizabeth, be successful in coaxing the watch away from the camp one continues singing until they reach the ruins where they camp. Once there, all three subdue the captive(s) and steal all of their items. Afterward, they carry the captive somewhere in the desert and leave them. They will continue this tactic each night until the group has nothing left to offer. Afterward, they intend to kill and eat one of their next victims and dry the meat of the following captive then go to another place in the desert to set up camp or return to Wentworth.

Should they be attacked at their camp, the harpies, each in turn, will first use their captivating song supernatural ability. They will continue to sing as they attack those that are not captivated.

Hints: A Search or Track check (DC 5) near the area that the harpies attempted to use their captivating song ability will turn up a pair of large bird-like, clawed feet. A further Knowledge (local) check (DC 17) reveals that the creature possible possessed flight while a (DC 22) discovers that the prints were indeed harpy tracks. Should a PC fail by 5 or more, they believe that the tracks were left by an Achaierai.

Amandis; Harpy: CR 4; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8; HP 34; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 16 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +3 masterwork studded leather), touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6, club); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA Captivating song; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Perform (oratory) +5, Spot +3; Dodge, Flyby attack, Persuasive.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather.

Elizabeth; Harpy: CR 4; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8; HP 22; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6, club); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA Captivating song; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Perform (oratory) +5, Spot +3; Dodge, Flyby attack, Persuasive.

Possessions: Blur potion, *resist energy* (fire) *potion*.

Captivating Song (Su): The most insidious ability of the harpy is its song. When a harpy sings, all creatures (other than harpies) within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or become captivated. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same harpy's song for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A captivated victim walks toward the harpy, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flame, off a cliff, or the like), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but takes no defensive penalties.) A victim within 5 feet of the harpy stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effect continues for as long as the harpy sings and for 1 round thereafter. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

Sheila; Harpy, 7th-Level Fighter: CR 11; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8+7d10+28; HP 103; Init +9; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 23 (+5 Dex, +1 natural, +6 *+3 studded leather*, +1 *ring of protection +1*), touch 16, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +14; Grp +15; Atk +15 melee (1d3+1, 2 claws) or +22/+17/+12 ranged (1d8+4 19-20/x3 plus 1d6 cold, *+1 frost composite longbow* (+1 Str bonus)); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.;

SA Captivating song; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 19.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Intimidate +5, Listen +7, Perform (oratory) +10, Spot +5; Alertness, Improved Critical (composite longbow), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Specialization (composite longbow).

Possessions: +3 studded leather, *+1 frost composite longbow* (+1 Str bonus), 5 *+2 arrows*, *lesser bracers of archery*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of cat's grace*, *cloak of resistance*, *ring of protection +1*, 10 cold iron arrows, 10 silvered arrows.

Captivating Song (Su): Will DC 17 negates.

AFTERWARD

Shiela, if at all possible, will not fight to the death. Her wings provide an excellent means of escape. Should she suffer a grievous defeat, she will probably skulk back to Wentworth harassing less threatening individuals along the way.

As the PCs move onward into the desert, they may find others that will relate stories of a winged-monstrous woman hampering merchants.

Should the PCs defeat the hags, they find Sheila's bow is comprised of sinewy flesh, bone, and cartilage fused magically together. The string is made from magically strengthen tendons rather than twine.

A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 24) will reveal that the various tissue and bone is that of a frost giant.

Tracking

Discerning tracks in a world that is literally flooded with all types of strange creatures is difficult. When tracks are discovered and there is no sight of the particular creature that left the markings, add +5 to the DC of a Knowledge skill check in attempting to discern the creature responsible. Rangers may avoid this penalty should they have the creature's type as a favored enemy.

3D Models: City Dwelling

This issue, we bring you the first of our 3D model creations. We have designed the following structure to fit around the booster pack of your favorite Wizards of the Coast miniature game—so don't take out the trash just yet.

Well, if you have, don't worry. We also designed it to stand on its own as well. With the help of a some thicker printer paper you'll be all set to place this building on the table for tonight's skirmish.

However, before you begin, keep in mind these simple things:

- We found that the best kind of glue to use for this project is the good old fashioned gluestick. It is able to spread goo over a large area without any of the mess or hassle of other types of glue.
- Make sure your "print to fit" option is turned off before you begin printing the following pages.
- Also, if you have one of these booster boxes laying around that is great. You can go ahead and use regular printer paper as the box will serve as a good base. However, we do recommend that you use a thick paper for the roof section as it will not be supported like the rest of the building.
- Last, but not least, have fun. With the following design, you can create many different types of buildings. If you do, we would like to see them. Just send the photos to our art director Joshua Raynack at:

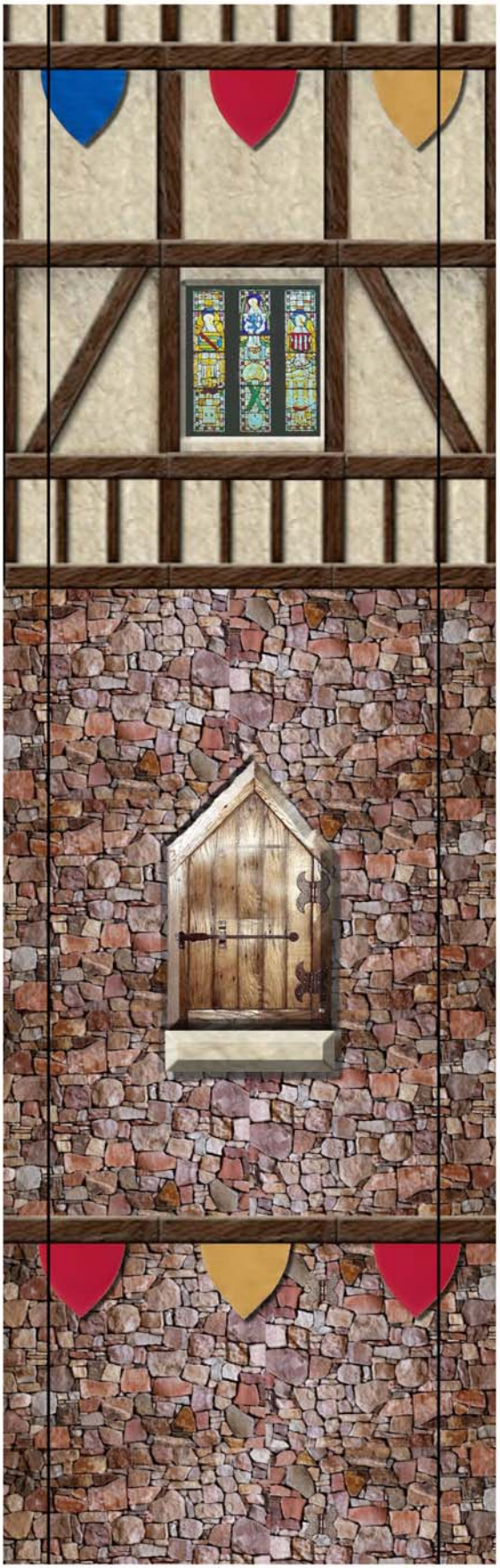
jraynack@aleapublishing.com

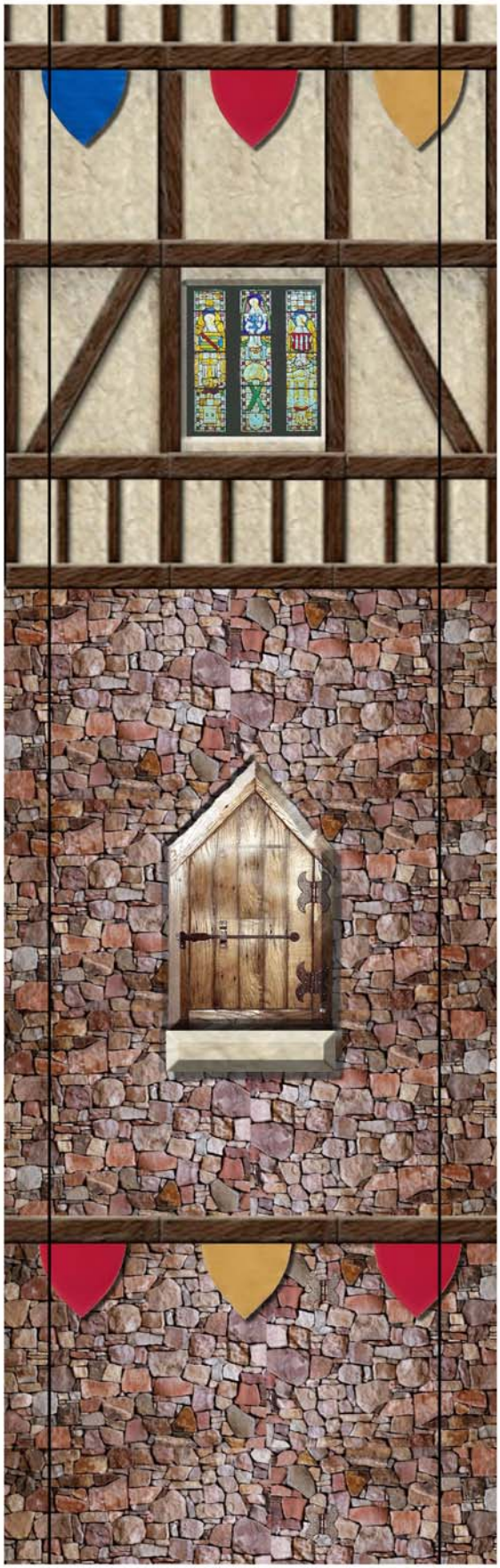
Step One: Cut those annoying flaps off the top. They're only going to get in the way.

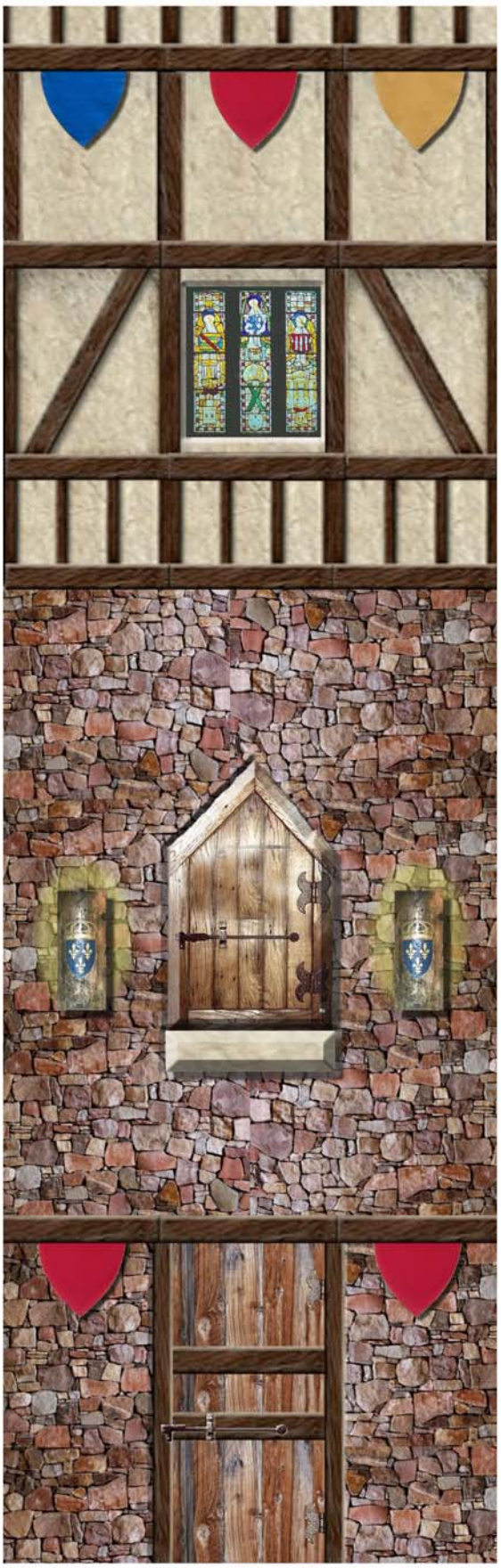
Step Two: Now that that is done, set the box upright. Let the gluing begin!

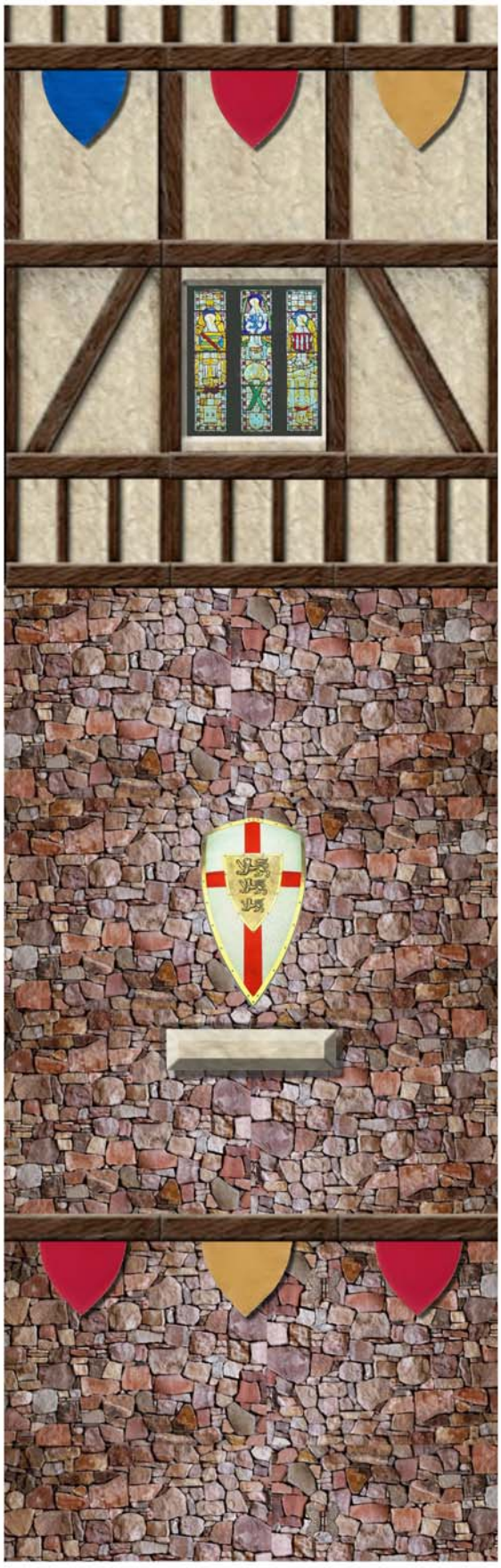
Step Three: Carefully cut the following pages and fit them accordingly. Glue them onto the box beginning with the side panels, followed by the front and back panels, ending with the roof.

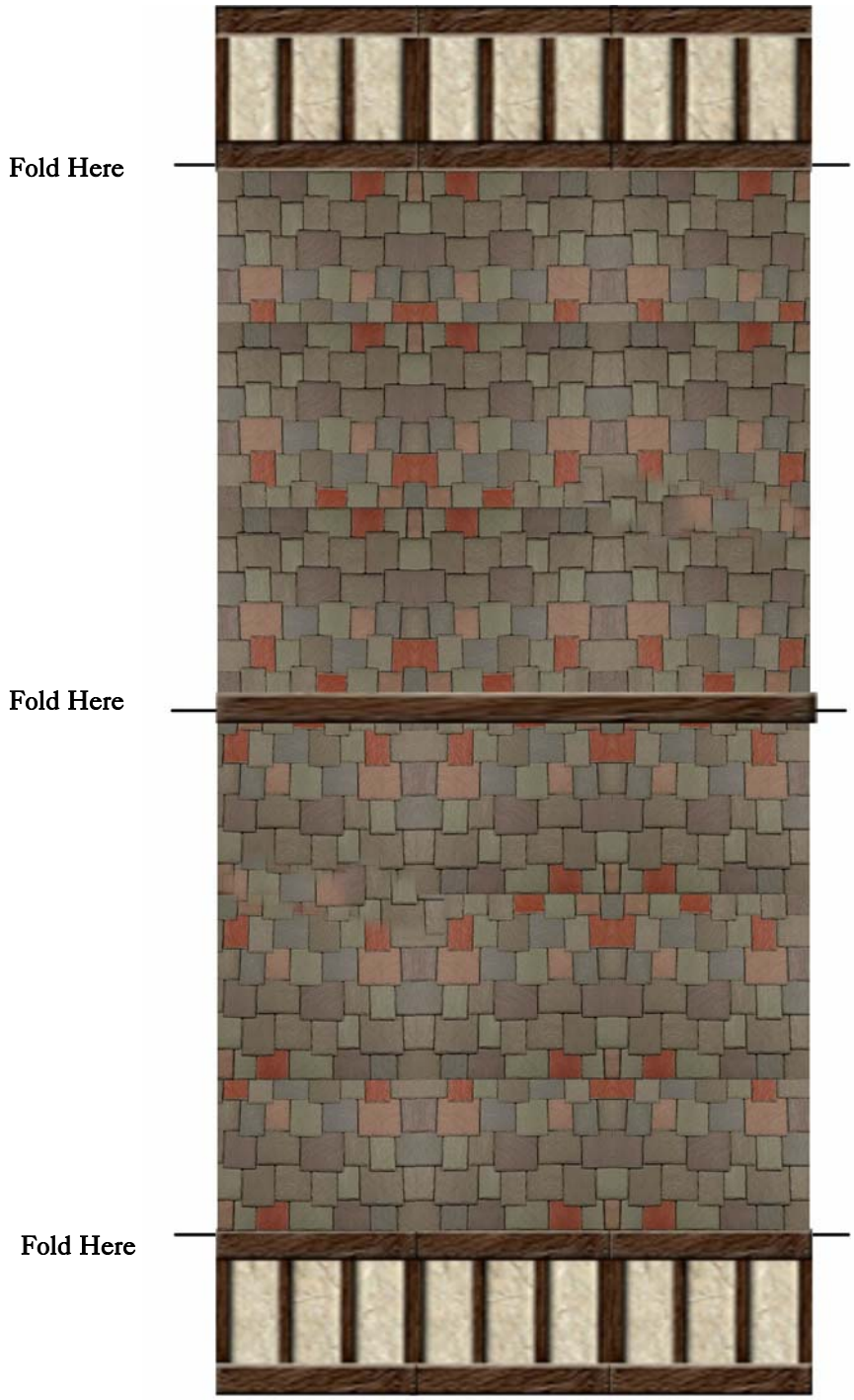
After the following steps, you should have something like this. However, this is only one type of building you can create. Be creative and send us those pics!







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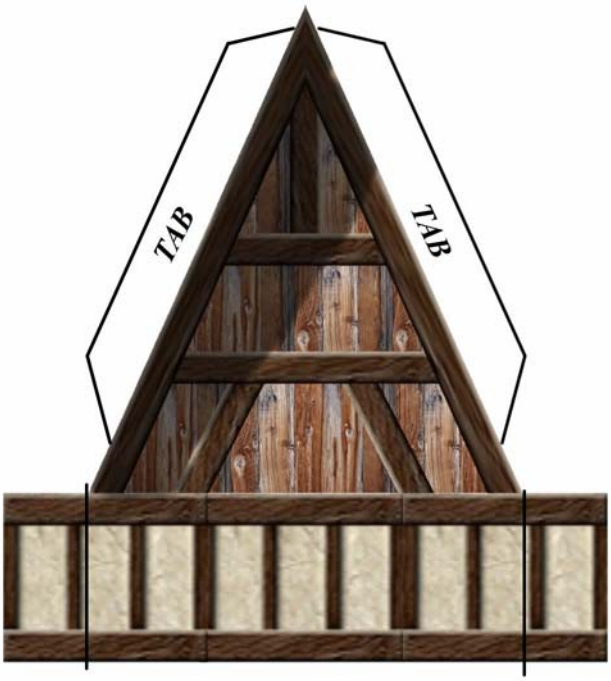
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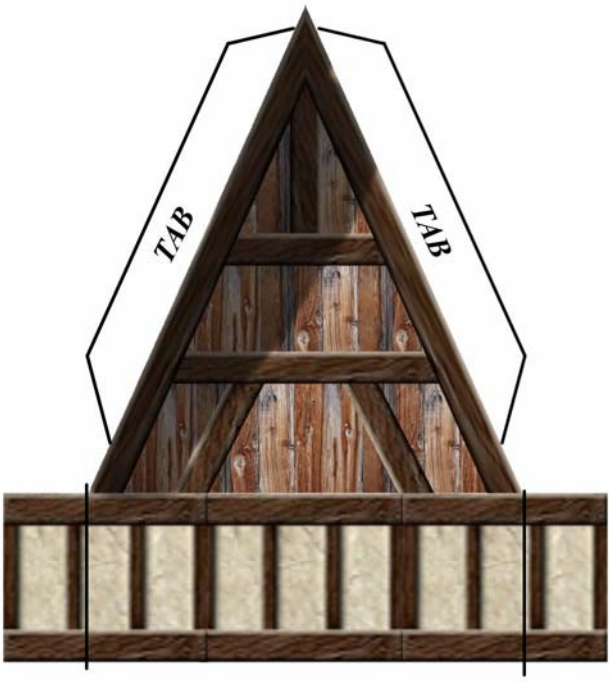
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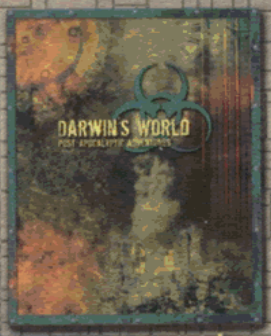

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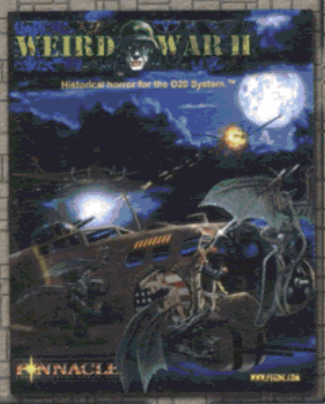

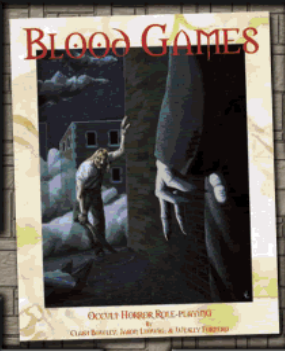

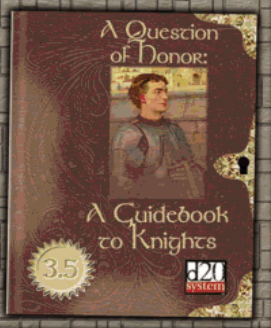

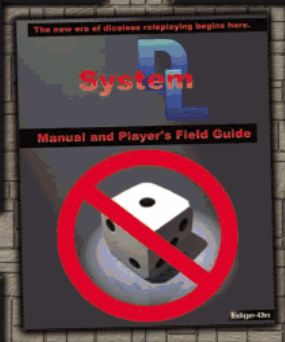

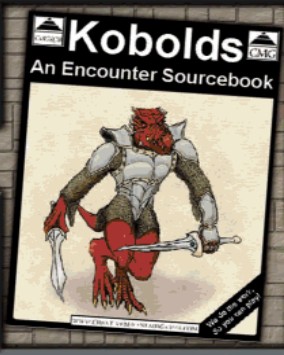

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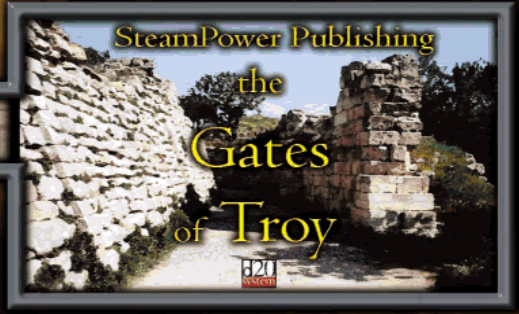

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